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**Local News** from The News Journal

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## Del. 1 opening delayed

### Beach traffic reason for schedule change

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The opening of the last section of Del. 1 still is about two weeks away, but already the planned opening has run into a delay.

State Department of Transportation officials this week said they will back up by one day the planned 44-hour opening of Del. 1, from Smyrna to Odessa.

The process now will begin at 6 p.m. May 19 instead of 6 p.m. May 18. Del. 1 northbound, from the south Smyrna exit to near Odessa, then will be closed to traffic.

Northbound traffic will be rerouted onto U.S. 13 through Smyrna so last-minute construction connecting existing and new portions of the limited-access road can be completed.

The southbound lanes of Del. 1 on the new eight-mile stretch will open by 6 a.m. May 20, one day later than originally planned. The northbound lanes will reopen to traffic by 2 p.m. May 21.

DelDOT officials decided to delay the process by one day so detours and delays won't interfere with weekend beach traffic.

"The benefit of starting it Sunday night vs. Monday night wasn't that great compared to the possible disruption there might be," said DelDOT spokeswoman Michele Ackles.

Ackles said DelDOT officials, who want to have the road open in time for the Memorial Day weekend rush May 23, feel comfortable with moving the opening just one day.

David Duke, the project resident engineer for Del. 1, said final construction work is moving smoothly now, and there shouldn't be a problem with the shifted schedule.

"The only thing that could throw a curve at us is a window of bad weather," Duke said.

Officials still expect traffic headaches for motorists on U.S. 13 around the time of Del. 1's opening, and advise drivers to steer clear if possible.

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